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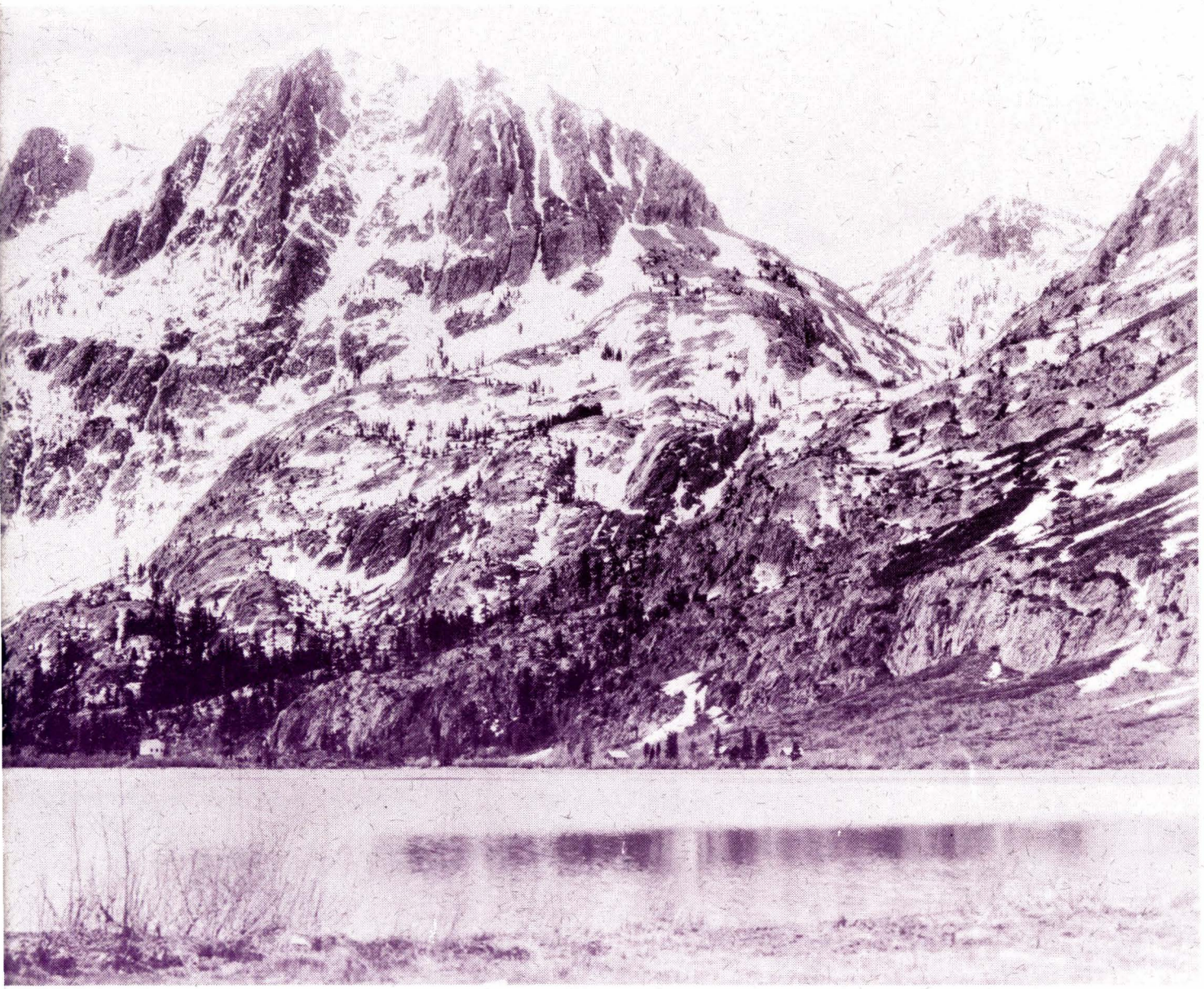
1993 Key Issues & Opportunities



INYO NATIONAL FOREST

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1993

Key Issues

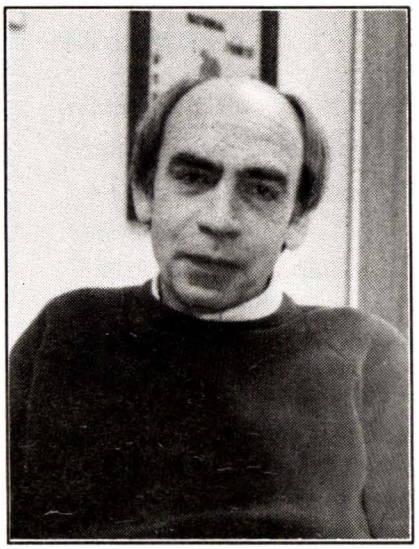
& Opportunities

6th edition

INYO NATIONAL FOREST

Message from Dennis Martin

Forest Supervisor



While 1992 was one of the most challenging and interesting years that we have experienced on the Inyo National Forest, I anticipate that 1993 will be even more so.

Fire and pestilence seemed to prevail over much of the summer. The drought finally caught up with us, and over 10,000 acres of National Forest lands were burned. The largest fire was the 8,500 acre Rainbow Fire, located mostly in the John Muir and Ansel Adams Wilderness Areas, near the Town of Mammoth Lakes. The response by Forest employees and cooperators, as well as residents, merchants, and other partners was outstanding, and acted as a catalyst in bringing people together. Although always endemic throughout the western U.S., we also experienced an increase in bubonic plague in some of our heavier used campgrounds, as did some of the other forests and National Parks, and it was necessary to close these while the area was treated. Unfortunately, the closures occurred during the heaviest use of the year.

Regardless of the downside, the Forest experienced some real successes, and most can be attributed to the contributions that many of you made to management of the Forest through partnerships and personal involvement. The Coalition for Unified Recreation in the Eastern Sierra initiative has picked up momentum and a number of projects are being planned and implemented that are beneficial to the economy as well as the resource values and quality of life inherent in the Eastern Sierra. On-going implementation of the Montgomery Pass Wild Horse Territory Coordinated Resource Management Plan continues to be very successful and demonstrates just how well agencies and the public can respond to mutual natural resource related issues, by working in concert.

We were also able to begin implementing the Chief's direction on ecosystems management with the Mammoth to June Study, and in 1993 will begin work on some exciting initiatives in other areas on the Forest. Consistent with ecosystems management, we worked closely with the Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station this last year, in management of the Research Natural Area program on the Forest. Staff and specialists were able to complete the management plan for Hall RNA, one of the first plans in the Nation.

In the area of Civil Rights, Forest personnel participated with the Town of Mammoth Lakes in a forum designed to identify and move toward solving the problem experienced by the Hispanic population in integrating into the local community. We will continue to participate in this effort, and hope to expand it with local leadership in other communities during the coming year.

The following issues and opportunities do a good job of defining what we will be dealing with in 1993, and there is little need for me to elaborate at this point. It is essential that we continue to work together as partners, and your participation in the decision making process continues to be critical. Out basic tenets include providing quality customer service along with improving and enhancing the natural resource values on the Forest, and I am convinced that the only way this can be done is with your assistance.

INYO NATIONAL FOREST

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INYO NATIONAL FOREST

1993 Key Issues

• *Allotment Management Plans*

Overview

The Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LMP) and national policy has directed the Forest to update grazing Allotment Management Plans (AMPs). All grazing permits must meet National Environmental Policy Act requirements to conform to LMP standards and guidelines, before new permits are issued or expired permits are reissued. AMPs exist for many of the 60 cattle and sheep grazing allotments on the Inyo, but most are outdated and must be redone to meet these requirements.

The review and update of AMPs is a significant task for the Forest. A majority of the grazing permits expire and need to be reissued between 1994 and 1996. The Forest has prioritized the allotments which need AMP revision based on the following criteria: date of permit expiration; existing/potential resource damage; conflicting resource needs; and previous commitments to grazing permittees.

Present Status

Data is being gathered for allotments which are planned for the outyears. Unfortunately the range budget does not reflect the level of expertise needed nor the funds for resource support for the AMP update process. Low levels of funding will make completion of the AMPs difficult at best, with the long range goal of having all the revisions complete by 1996 not possible. An amendment to the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan will be forthcoming this coming year to address this situation.

The Forest has undertaken an "ecosystem management" approach for allotments on the Kern Plateau and the eastern White Mountains incorporating the Washington Office's Riparian Initiative Program. This will result in several allotments being evaluated at one time based on analysis of an entire ecosystem rather than a single area.

The Cottonwood/Tres Plumas AMP remains unsigned, to date, though the Environmental Impact Assessment is complete. The Paiute Cutthroat trout, a federally listed "threatened" species, exists within the allotment area. For this reason, a "biological assessment" was completed by the Forest and forwarded to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWL) for their review and approval. Upon receipt of USFWL's decision, the Cottonwood/Tres Plumas AMP will be signed and implemented.

This past summer, the Forest hosted a Forest Rangelands Workshop. This workshop brought together grazing permitees, environmental groups, federal and state agencies and other interested individuals. This was a forum designed to encourage communication and to find common ground on grazing issues.

The Forest has a tentative priority list for AMP updates through 1998 and the proceedings of the Forest Rangelands Workshop. Both of these documents are available for review at the Forest Supervisor's Office in Bishop.

• *Boundary Peak Wilderness*

Overview

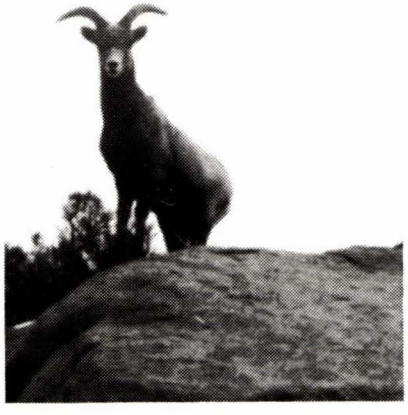
The Boundary Peak Wilderness was created in 1989 under Nevada wilderness legislation. It consists of 10,700 acres located on the eastern slopes of the White Mountains. Entirely within Nevada, it is the newest addition to the National Wilderness System on the Inyo National Forest. The highest point in Nevada, Boundary Peak (13,140'), is included which gives this wilderness its name.

The Inyo National Forest "Land & Resource Management PLan", approved in 1988, proposed 120,008 acres of wilderness to be created in the White Mountains. The 10,700 acres established as Boundary Peak Wilderness is a part of this total acreage.

Present Status

Contact has been made with our California congressional representatives to introduce wilderness legislation for the remaining acreage. This would create a viable wilderness and protect those values identified in the Forest Plan.

Our intent is to continue to actively pursue legislation for the entire area in the White Mountains prior to initiating an environmental analysis and wilderness management plan for the Boundary Peak Wilderness. A plan could thus be done for the total area rather than piece mealing management options. The White Mountain Ranger District is preparing interim direction for management of this wilderness pending additional wilderness designations in the area.



• *John Muir & Ansel Adams Wilderness Management Plan*

Overview

The John Muir and Ansel Adams (then Minarets) Wilderness Management Plans were approved in 1979. New issues have surfaced since the wilderness management plans were approved and these must be analyzed and direction provided. The Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan approved in 1988, and the Sierra National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, released in 1992, provide direction to revise or update these plans. 1984 additions to the Ansel Adams Wilderness are to be included in the update. In conjunction with the revision of these plans, management direction will also be provided for the Dinkey Lakes and Monarch Wilderness. Dinkey Lakes is managed by the Sierra National Forest and the Monarch by the Sierra and Sequoia National Forests.

Present Status

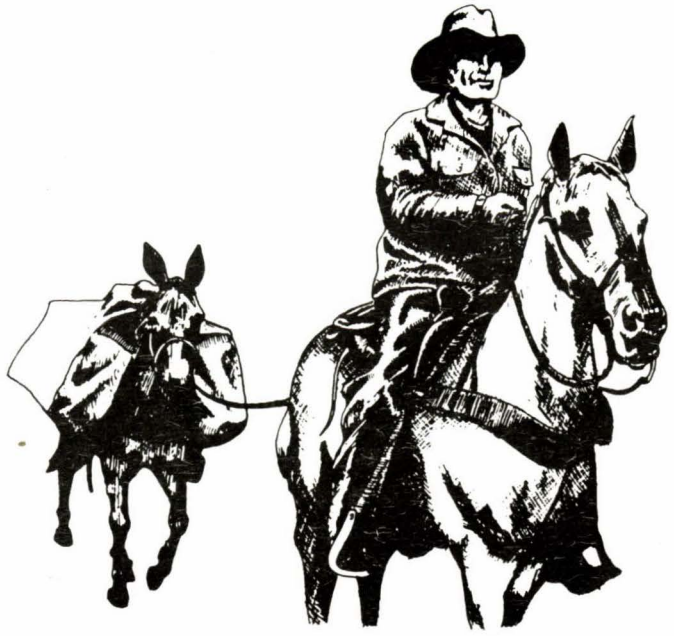
The Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra National Forests will jointly revise the John Muir and Ansel Adams Wilderness Plans and provide direction for the Monarch and Dinkey Lakes Wildernesses. An Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) has been formed to recommend revisions. The process will include identification of issues, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement analyzing alternate methods of resolving the issues, and preparation of the Implementation Plan. The process will include opportunities for public involvement, including the formation of a public involvement team composed of representatives of various user groups. The public involvement team will recommend actions to the IDT which in turn will recommend them to the Forest Supervisors. The draft documents are scheduled for completion in CY 1993 and Final EIS and Plan are scheduled to be completed in CY 1994. New or revised management direction will result in amendments to the respective Forest Land and Resource Management Plans

• *Golden Trout Prescribed Natural Fire Planning*

Overview

Since the completion of the Inyo Forest Land and Resource Management Plan in 1988, the Forest has practiced three fire protection strategies. Those strategies have been control, containment and confinement. Particular emphasis has been placed in the Golden Trout Area because access is limited, and elevation and vegetation types allow fire managers to practice fire protection strategies other than full control. Previously the primary decision criteria for using contain or confine strategies has been cost. Basically if the Forest could save money by using contain or confine strategies, and certain burned acre objectives were met, fires would be suppressed with much less commitment of resources.

In 1988, after the wildfires in Yellowstone, a national review of a perceived "let burn policy" by federal agencies was completed. Direction was then given to all federal agencies with fire protection responsibilities to develop prescribed natural fire plans in areas where resource objectives could be met by allowing wildfire to burn with limited or no suppression action. Before these prescribed natural fire plans can be implemented, fire planning must be completed to identify key resource issues along with the identification of fire prescription parameters. Since 1988, the practice of using contain or confinement strategies has provided the Forest with necessary information on fire parameters. The key resource issues have also been identified from other related projects in the Golden Trout Wilderness.



Present Status

The Inyo Forest plans to complete a prescribed natural fire plan for the Golden Trout Wilderness before next fire season (June, 1993). Staff from the Mt. Whitney District and the Inyo Forest Supervisor's Office will be working with the Sequoia Forest and Sequoia Kings National Park to coordinate this effort. There will be a public review period of a draft plan to incorporate any public concerns or issues.

• *Mount Whitney Trail Administration*

Overview

There are a tremendous number of users on the Mt. Whitney Trail - - 23,956 in FY 92 (64,822 Total Visitor Days) -- in the John Muir Wilderness. The top of Mt. Whitney, highest point in the contiguous United States, is relatively easy to attain and requires only a 10.7 mile hike at an average 10% grade, is close to a major metropolis of Los Angeles, and is becoming quite popular for foreign visitors.

The Mt. Whitney Trail, gives rise to several areas of concern. While all the problems may not be unique to the Mt. Whitney Trail, their magnitude deserves special attention. These include: human waste management; health and safety for wilderness rangers; the wilderness ranger workload; the nature of the wilderness experience; enforcement of, and public relations regarding the quota system; impacts to the trailhead facil-

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ities, and search and rescue.

Present Status

There are many problems related to human waste with the two solar toilets that are located at Outpost and Trail Camp. These problems include handling the large amount of waste that is generated, employee health and safety, costs of removal of the waste by either contracted pack string or by helicopter, and on-going maintenance problems with the solar system. In respect to the wilderness experience, there is an average of 250-300 people a day on the trail, camping space is limited, and in many ways is inconsistent with the solitude that most users expect in the Wilderness. A quota system is in effect for overnight users, but there is none for day hikers. Of the total use, 8,316 people were given overnight permits, and 15,640 were day users. As a result of the quota system there is an inordinate administrative cost involved both in respect to issuing permits as well as law enforcement. Trailhead facilities are another problem. There is space for 185 vehicles, but it is not uncommon to have another 175 cars parked along the shoulder on the 1/2 mile stretch below the parking area. In respect to Forest Service staffing needs, the Mt. Whitney Ranger District has one permanent part-time ranger and one or two seasonal rangers to handle all of the problems associated with the Mt. Whitney Trail as well as the rest of the John Muir Wilderness that is on that District.

The Forest is currently analyzing the problems on the trail and at the portal, attempting to generate some alternatives for solutions, and will be seeking internal and public input throughout the process.

This is really not one issue by itself but several issues stemming from the tremendous popularity of the trail and trailhead facilities. Things to be considered if limiting use is proposed are: how much of a reduction of use would relieve the pressure to acceptable levels? How much of the use is not under Forest control, i.e. originating in the National Park or other trailheads? What are the impacts on the local community? What will be the impacts to adjacent wilderness? How will the limitations be implemented? How will they be enforced? How will limitations affect the Forest budget?

Partial use reduction, in combination with other management strategies, requires considerations such as: what types of solar toilet operation and maintenance equipment is appropriate in the wilderness? Is helicopter support justifiable for operation and maintenance of the solar toilets? What would the cost comparison be to operate and maintain the toilets using only primitive means? Can parking and traffic be controlled to reduce vehicle congestion? Can fee parking permits be required? Should more parking facilities be constructed? What would be the impact on the concessionaire operated campground at Whitney Portal and the Whitney Portal Store, operated under Special Use Permit?

• *Wild & Scenic Management Plan: North/South Fork of the Kern River*

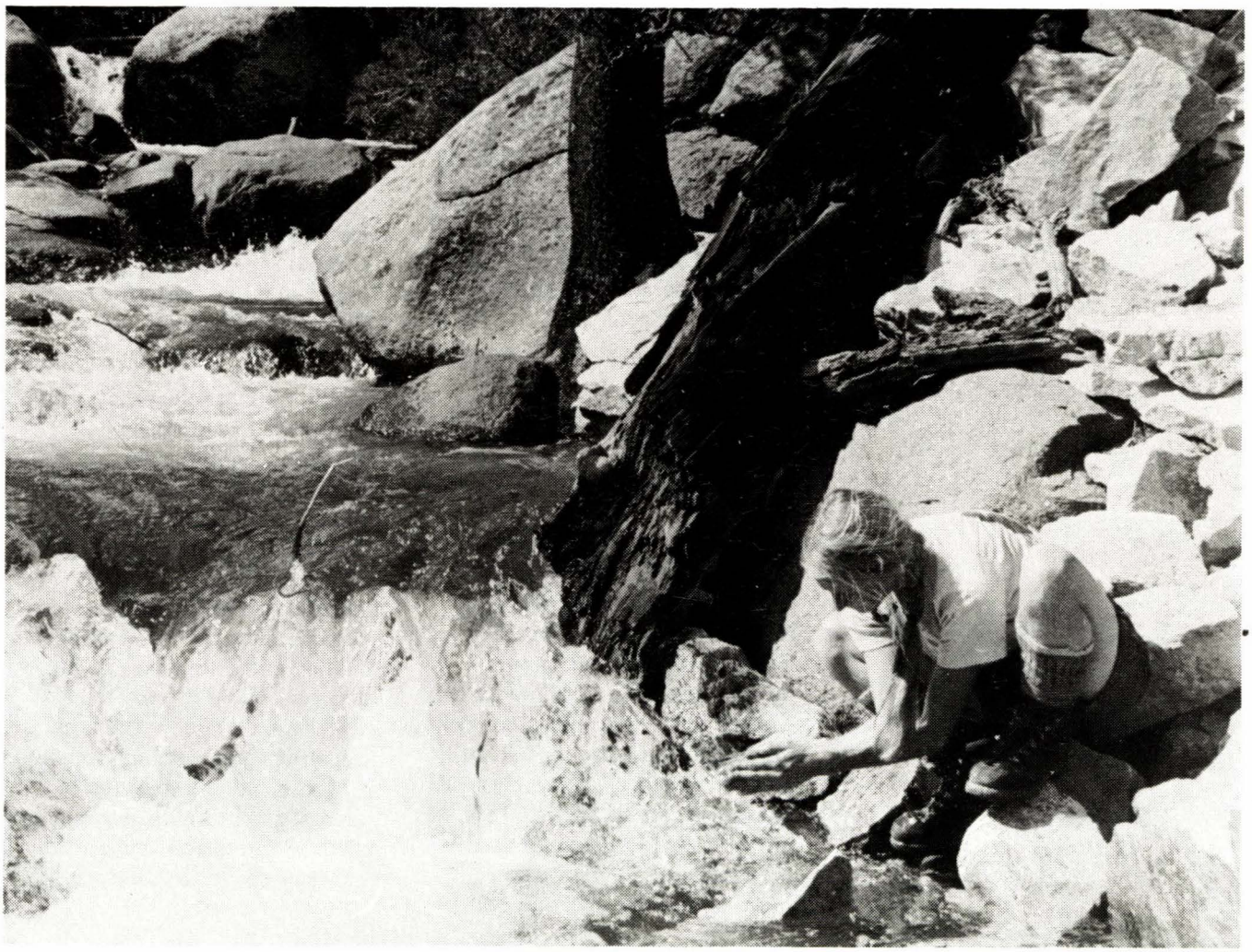
Overview

The North and South Forks of the Kern River were designated as "Wild and Scenic" by legislation enacted on November 24, 1987. Supporting legislation required the Forest Service to delineate the corridor boundary, classify segments, and prepare an Implementation Plan for the management of these rivers and associated resources. The Environmental Assessment for boundary corridor designation and segment classification was completed in February of 1989. The Regional Forester signed the associated Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact on April 3, 1989. This notice established the corridor as one-quarter mile in either side of the river.

Present Status

The Sequoia National Forest, working with the Inyo National Forest, serves as the lead agency for the development of the Implementation Plan and the associated Environmental Impact Statement. For those portions of the river on National Forest lands, the plan is being developed by an Interdisciplinary Team of resource specialists from the two Forests.

The draft documents were completed in 1992. Based on public comments submitted in response to the draft documents. The Implementation Plan and the Environmental Impact Statement are being revised. The release of the final documents is schedule for CY 1993.



• *Coalition for Unified Recreation in the Eastern Sierra*

Overview

The Inyo National Forest receives as much recreation use as any National Forest in the system. In the Eastern Sierra region, recreation occurs on National Forest lands, Public Domain administered by the Bureau of Land Management, National Parks (Yosemite and Death Valley), California State Parks, City of Los Angeles lands, Inyo and Mono County lands, and private property. Many individuals, organizations, and agencies are responsible for serving visitors to the area and for managing the recreation resources. The Coalition for Unified Recreation in the Eastern Sierra (CURES) was established to help bring together the many recreation providers in an effort to "preserve the natural, cultural, and economic resources and enrich the experiences of visitors and residents". The basic premise of CURES is, "A collaborative effort (recreation providers working together) is considerably more responsible and effective than individual efforts (recreation providers working independently).

Goals and objectives of CURES include:

1. Sharing information, ideas, and technologies.
2. Providing public and private partnerships to better serve the public.
3. Reducing duplication of services.
4. Sharing resources.
5. Improving coordination between federal, state, and local agencies.
6. Enhancing and improving visitor services and recreation opportunities.
7. Improving natural resource protection and management.
8. Minimizing conflict among recreationists.
9. Improving the economic status of both the private and public sectors.
10. Approaching planning and public service holistically.
11. Cooperating on funding needed projects.
12. Getting to know each other better.

Present Status

Following a two day recreation workshop held in October of 1991, the CURES organization was developed. More than 50 individuals, representing the diverse recreation providers of the Eastern Sierra, are currently working together as a coalition in an attempt to achieve some of the 12 broad goals stated above. Task groups have been formed to focus on marketing, interpretation and information, resource and economic balancing, and many new recreation projects. To date, progress has been made on formulating a "vision statement" for recreation and resource management in the Eastern Sierra to help guide CURES activities and continue to discover "common - ground" on recreation issues. Projects are in the development stages for: an Eastern Sierra Mountain Bike Opportunities Map; Multi-Lingual Publications; Standard Self-Serve Information Stations to be located at Forest Service Campground Host Sites; Lee Vining Creek Trail and Interpretive Exhibits; June Lake Self-Serve Information Kiosk; Highway 395 Scenic Byway nomination; Lee Vining Canyon Scenic Byway Interpretation; Tioga Pass Information Station and Overlook; interpretation associated with the new Bristlecone Pine Visitor Center; Eastern Sierra Wilderness Education Plan and Materials; Recreation Stock Corridors Plan; a common "Good Host" Training program for all Eastern Sierra Recreation Providers; and an Eastern Sierra Marketing Strategy.

While actual projects are at early phases of development, many benefits of CURES are already evident in the improved relations between private recreation providers, agency officials, community leaders, chambers of commerce, and representatives of special interest organizations. The Forest Service will continue to make CURES a top priority, as it provides an excellent avenue for the agency to constructively work for common purpose and commitment in the area of recreation management with all interested and affected external groups and individuals.

Overview

The Forest Service is increasing its role in Rural Community Development. The 1990 Farm Bill provided the Forest Service with the authority and responsibility to assist National Forest resource dependent communities. In addition to the Bill, the Chief of the Forest Service has signed a rural development strategy which further directs the agency in its role in rural development. There are many programs available through the Forest Service to assist communities to develop a vital economy.

Both Inyo and Mono Counties meet the definition of rural communities under the Bill. The Forest will continue to work with communities over the course of the year to develop Action Plans and submit funding proposals. One such action plan was developed through the CURES organization and will be updated this year.

Overview

Presidential Executive Order No. 11644 of February 9, 1972, required the establishment of policies and procedures that would ensure use of off-highway vehicles on public lands, promote the safety of all users of the lands, and minimize conflicting uses of those lands as well.

The Inyo National Forest policy for management of Off-Highway Vehicles and Over-Snow Vehicles (OHV/OSV) is presently contained in the Interagency Motor Vehicles Use Plan, approved in 1977 by the Inyo National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, and the City of Los Angeles, subject to various modifications approved in Forest Orders and in wilderness designated by Congress subsequent to the 1977 Plan.

Present Status

The Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan directs the Forest to manage OHV/OSV use under the existing 1977 plan until that plan is updated following implementation of the Forest Plan. The Motor Vehicle Use Plan has been separated from the Over-the-Snow Vehicle Use Plan. An Interagency Forest Service/BLM EIS is being prepared for the Motor Vehicle Use Plan. A third plan, the High Desert OHV Plan sponsored by the Bureau of Land Management, has studied BLM and National Forest lands adjacent to Bishop. The Plan has been approved and is now being implemented.

The DRAFT Interagency Motor Vehicle Use Plan and EIS is almost complete. Some additional work on maps and data tables needs to be accomplished before the draft is released to the public, which is planned for sometime in January, 1993.

A consensus group was formed to deal with issues and concerns raised with over-the-snow vehicle use on Forest lands. Their input has been considered by the Forest Service, and the final maps have been drawn and approved. These maps will be incorporated into a Forest Order governing over-the-snow vehicle use on Forest lands. A winter activity map/brochure is being produced. It covers not only snowmobiling, but also other winter activities in the Mammoth Lakes and June Lake areas. This brochure should be available to the public in January, 1993.

Following completion and approval of the Interagency Motor Vehicle Use Plan, the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power plan to jointly produce public maps for distribution at ranger stations, offices, and visitor/information centers.

Overview

Mountain biking is one of the fastest growing sports on the Inyo National Forest. Currently, Mammoth Mountain operates a mountain bike park on the Ski Area during the summer months. In addition, a joint effort between the Ski Area, Town of Mammoth Lakes, and the Forest Service resulted in a series of roads and trails being posted for mountain bike users. A corresponding brochure was also produced as a part of this effort. The response from the public was even greater than was predicted. This fiscal year the Forest will be developing a Forestwide Mountain Bike Plan.

Since the sport has grown so quickly many items of concern have been raised with regards to mountain biking. The back roads on the Forest provide an excellent and varied experience for the riders. The trail systems however, were not designed for mountain bike use, and most of the Forest trails are closed to bicycles. There appears to be an increasing demand for this "single track" type of experience as evidenced by the growing number of cyclists using the trails illegally.

The illegal use has presented many problems. A large number of the trails are currently being used by equestrians, which presents a safety concern when a horse and bicycle meet in a dangerous location. This use has also presented erosion and trail maintenance concerns, as the trails were not designed for this use the wear and tear is occurring at a high rate. There have also been instances of trails providing unwanted access to private lands. In addition, there have been many cases of bicycles using trails in the wilderness which is in direct conflict with the Wilderness Act.

During the coming year the Inyo National Forest will be assessing this issue and determining a plan of action. We will be meeting with interested groups and individuals to help us determine the issues and concerns.

• *Mammoth Lakes Water Issue*

Overview

The issue of water quantity as it relates to existing and proposed developments in and around the Town of Mammoth Lakes is still a major issue.

The Mammoth County Water District (MCWD) operates the local water delivery systems, and sells water to customers within the District. Currently water is being supplied to the customers from sources both on and off National Forest lands. There is an operating agreement between the MCWD and the Forest Service for the management of the water resources on National Forest lands in the Mammoth Lakes area. The main water source on the National Forest in this area is the Lakes Basin.

Projections of water demand based on the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan exceeds that of the locally developed supply. In an effort to meet future demands, MCWD is currently pursuing additional water supplies. The MCWD is currently studying the possibility of additional storage capabilities in the Lakes Basin. In addition, the Mammoth Ranger District is in the process of preparing an Environmental Assessment on a new well system located in the Dry Creek Drainage. The decision on the Dry Creek wells should be out by the end of November, 1992.

The MCWD is also pursuing the development of ground water sources on private lands. Recently they successfully located new water sources and are currently going through the State environmental processes for approval to use those sources.

The Town is also in the process of revising the General Plan. The water issue and how it relates to the Plan is being discussed in great detail. The amount of necessary water may or may not change with the final outcome of their Plan.

The decisions made by the Forest Service, specific to the Mammoth Lakes area, will continue to take water availability into consideration.

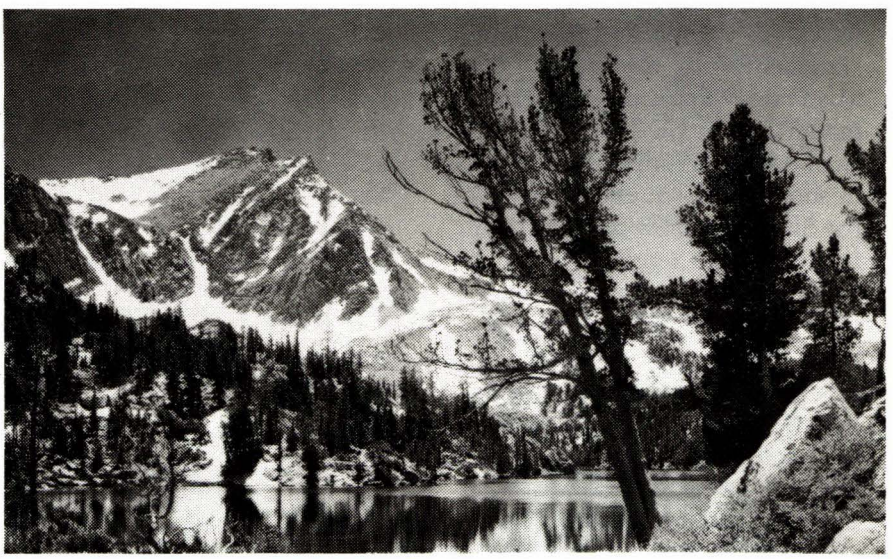
• *Mammoth Airport Expansion*

Overview

In October of 1991, the Town of Mammoth Lakes purchased the Mammoth/June Lakes Airport from Mono County. As of October 1992, escrow has not yet closed. Portions of the existing airport facilities are under permit with the Inyo National Forest. These include the road, some private hangers, and beacons.

The Town of Mammoth Lakes has indicated that they will pursue the development of a crosswind runway and an addition to the existing runway. The Town has also indicated an interest in looking at the possibility of a land exchange to smooth out the boundary lines between the Federal and non-Federal lands allowing the development of additional hanger space on non-Federal land. The Mammoth Ranger District will begin public scoping to determine the type of environmental analysis following the receipt of a proposal from the Town.

The Town is close to the point of receiving funding form the FAA which will allow the closure of escrow. We expect to receive a proposal in the near future.



• *Proposed Sherwin Ski Area*

Overview

The proposed Sherwin Bowl Ski Area is located adjacent to the community of Mammoth Lakes with the base area on private land. Sherwin Bowl Area was originally designated by the Chief of the Forest Service in 1967 as a winter-sports site. This designation was reaffirmed during the late 1970's through a winter sports planning effort by the Forest Serve and the public which identified various potential ski area on the Inyo National Forest. Numerous studies in conjunction with this designation have been conducted on the Sherwin Area since the 1960's.

Present Status

In 1982, Allan O'Connor made application for a Special Use Permit for the Sherwin Ski Area. O'Connor later joined with the Dempsey Corporation, a developer in the Mammoth Lakes area with property adjacent to the proposed site. As a means of accelerating the consideration of the joint proposal, the proponents provided funds or contracted with consultants for the studies needed to determine the feasibility of the proposal. These studies included economics, air quality, water quality, wildlife, visual resources, and many others.

On the basis of the Feasibility Study completed in 1986, the Forest Service began the process of evaluating the proposal as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was released in 1988. After analyzing the public comments on this document, a decision was made to issue a revised DEIS in 1989, which would allow the public the chance to comment on the changes made to the proposal. The comments on the revised DEIS were evaluated and incorporated in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) which was released in October of 1990.

Based on the analysis documented in the FEIS, Forest Supervisor Dennis Martin made a decision to issue a special use permit to the proponents to allow them to continue with the detail planning of the proposed ski area. The decision was appealed by four parties, but upheld by the Chief of the Forest Service in 1992.

A permit has been issued to Dempsey Construction Corporation for the preparation of the Master Development Plan for the proposed ski area. This Master Plan will detail the location of ski lifts, ski runs, access roads, facilities, and associated developments. When plans are completed, the Forest Service will again evaluate the proposal as required by NEPA. When the evaluation is complete, a decision to approve or disapprove the Master Development Plan will be made.

Overview

The Forest Land and Resource Management Plan approved in August 1988 specified: "Conduct a cumulative effects study of the Mammoth/June area when a development proposal in this area requires an Environmental Impact Statement. The Mammoth/June area is defined by U.S. 395 on the east; Highway 203 on the south; the John Muir and Ansel Adams Wildernesses on the west; and the ridgeline of the June Lake complex on the north" (p. 187).

Present Status

At this time no specific development proposal has been made. However, due to increased, potentially conflicting resource demands on the area, the Inyo Forest Management Team decided to begin a planning process that would result in a comprehensive, project specific, planning document for the Mammoth-June area. The process is outlined in a study plan that was completed in the summer of 1992. The intent is to collect base-line resource data, develop quantified resource thresholds, scope for project options, and then complete the National Environmental Policy Act process for those options. The result of the process will be the selection of an alternative that will identify an integrated set of actions that will be implemented in the Mammoth-June area. This effort will not revise or revisit the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The intent is to implement plan direction in an integrated manner, which will allow for a more accurate analysis of cumulative effects while reducing conflicts between resources.

Collection of base-line data began in 1991. Information was collected on many resources including water, timber, soils, recreation, cultural, vegetation, geology, minerals, air, wildlife, fisheries, lands, transportation, and range. Resource specialists will be using computer based Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to support the analysis of this resource data. Development of the computerized data storage system will begin this winter.

The analysis will also incorporate the principles of Ecosystem Management in the design of alternatives and the analysis of effects. This includes managing for sustainability of all resources and placing special emphasis on enhancement of unique resource values; entering into partnerships; involving the scientific community in the design of management systems; and applying "light-on-the-land" principles. Most of these concepts were incorporated into the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and process, but the Mammoth/June area presents a unique opportunity to showcase these principles.

• *Existing / Proposed Hydroelectric Projects*

Overview

Southern California Edison Company (SCE) operates four existing hydropower projects located in the Rush Creek, Lee Vining Creek, Lundy Canyon, and Bishop Creek drainages of the Forest. The Federal licenses originally issued for these projects expired in the mid-1980's. Since then, the Forest has been working with SCE and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in the re-licensing process and the development of Forest Service conditions to be made a part of the new licenses for each of these projects. Know as "4(e)" conditions, they will include operating requirements and resource protection measures to mitigate the impacts that these hydropower uses have on Forest resources and other National Forest uses. Mitigation measures that the Forest will include in new license authorizations are those necessary for these uses to continue in a manner such that their impacts comply with the management standards and guidelines of the Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan.

Present Status - Relicensing of Existing Projects

The re-licensing process for each of SCE's four existing projects are in various stages of completion. 4(e) conditions for the Bishop Creek project were originally prepared and submitted to the FERC in 1988. In 1991, pending no action taken by FERC on relicensing of the project, the Forest and SCE developed revisions to those 4(e) conditions. The Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Regional Office is currently drafting revisions to its 1988 Decision Notice for this project to formally adopt revised 4(e) conditions for submittal to the FERC and inclusion in the new license. A Revised Decision Notice is expected to be released before the end of 1992.

In the spring and summer of 1992, the Forest completed an environmental assessment (EA) in support of its 4(e) license conditions for relicensing of SCE's Lundy and Rush Creek projects. In May, 1992 our Regional Office submitted a Decision Notice adopting our 4(e) conditions for the Lundy Project, and in July, 1992 submitted a Decision Notice adopting our 4(e) conditions for Rush Creek. SCE formally appealed the Forest Service's license conditions for both projects. In their appeals, SCE is disputing specific Forest Service conditions for each project, including minimum instream flow and resource monitoring requirements. For both projects, SCE is challenging the agency's authority to condition a license in such a manner that it requires the licensee to obtain from the Forest Service a special use authorization in addition to FERC license. Both appeals are pending Forest Service Washington Office review, in which the agency is considering making changes to its policy concerning the authorization of hydropower uses on National Forest lands. Action on these appeals is expected sometime during 1993.

In 1988, the Forest Service provided the FERC with a preliminary set of 4(e) license conditions for FERC to consider in its completion of an EA for the relicensing of SCE's Lee Vining Creek Project. The Forest will conduct an environmental evaluation of the relicensing of this project upon completion of FERC's EA. From that evaluation, the Forest will produce an appropriate environmental document, and our Regional Office will then adopt a final set of 4(e) license conditions that will be submitted to FERC for inclusion in a new license. The FERC is expected to complete its EA for this project in late 1992, followed by Forest Service completion of its work and development of 4(e) conditions in early 1993.

In the 1980's, another proponent made application to FERC for four new hydropower project proposals on National Forest lands within the Inyo National Forest. They consist of the following:

Project Name	Location
Leggett Project	Lee Vining Creek
Tungstar Project	Upper Pine Creek, immediately below the Stratcor Tungstar Mine
Pine Creek Project	Immediately below the Tungstar Project
Red Mountain-Tinemaha Project	Red Mountain and Tinemaha Creek *(8 miles SSW of Big Pine)*

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Present Status - New Hydropower Project Proposals

The Forest's four new hydropower project proposals are also in various states of processing and appeal. In late 1985, the Forest Service submitted to the FERC its 4(e) license conditions for the Leggett Project. In early 1986, the proponent appealed those conditions. The appeal is as yet unresolved, pending Forest Service re-evaluation of its 1985 4(e) conditions in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In October, 1992, the FERC completed an environmental evaluation of the project proposal, and documented that evaluation in an EA. The Forest Service will now be using FERC's EA in re-evaluating its 1985 4(e) license conditions. Our re-evaluation will be included in an appropriate NEPA document that will support an affirmation of or any revisions to our 1985 4(e) conditions. That is expected to be completed in late 1992, and will then be forwarded to our Washington Office so that they may act upon the proponent's appeal of our 4(e) license conditions for the project.

The Tungstar Project was licensed by the FERC on July 2, 1992. The Forest is working with the proponent on the issuance of a Forest Service Special Use Permit for the project, as required by the Forest Service 4(e) license conditions. The proponent has disputed the Forest Service's proposal to authorize, under the terms of our Special Use Permit, an area which would cause an overlap of the Tungstar Project's facilities with facilities proposed by the proponent for the Pine Creek project (located immediately downstream from the Tungstar Project). The Forest will be working with the proponent in resolving this dispute, and in approving a series of plans for construction of the project. The license requires that project construction begin within 2 years of issuance. A schedule for project construction has not yet been submitted, making it difficult to predict when on the ground construction might begin.

On April 6, 1990, the Forest Service issued a Decision Notice in response to an application for license for the Pine Creek Project. The Forest Service Decision Notice recommended to the FERC that a license for the project be denied. The proponent appealed that decision on May 21, 1990. A decision on the appeal has not yet been made, pending Washington Office review of additional information submitted to them in 1992 by both the appellant and the Forest. Action on this appeal is expected in late 1992 or early 1993.

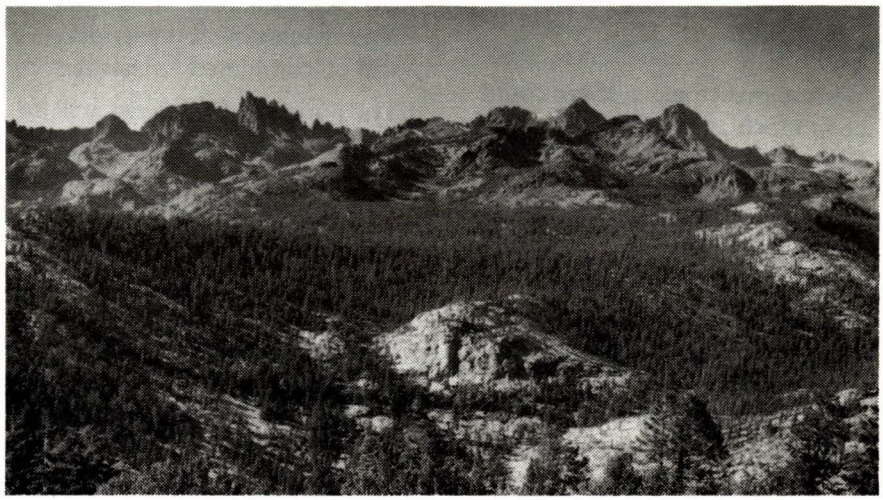
The Red Mountain-Tinemaha Project was licensed by the FERC on January 20, 1988. In April, 1992, the Forest Service issued the proponent a Special Use Permit for the project. The proponent appealed the terms and conditions of our permit, claiming that they conflict with the FERC license concerning authorization for the use of Federally-owned riparian water rights. The appeal was reviewed and denied. Litigation in Federal court over this issue is expected during 1993.

Overview

Land exchange is the primary tool that the Inyo National Forest uses to accomplish landownership adjustment goals and objectives. One of those objectives is to consolidate landownership patterns which, in turn, reduces the need to grant right-of-way authorizations for access to non-federal land in-holdings, reduces the number of miles of common boundary between National Forest and private lands, and secures Forest Service access to adjoining National Forest System lands. Our land exchange program has resulted in the conveyance into private ownership, of National Forest lands needed for orderly community growth and expansion in and around the population centers of Mammoth Lakes and the June Lake Loop. In exchange, the Forest Service acquires scattered parcels throughout the Forest having high wilderness, recreation, riparian, wetland, and wildlife values.

Present Status

In early 1993, the Forest will be completing its Service Center Land Exchange Case with Southern California Edison Company (SCE). In this case, SCE will be acquiring title to 2 acres of National Forest land adjacent to their existing service center facility in the Town of Mammoth Lakes, and the Forest will be acquiring approximately 150 acres of SCE owned land on Lee Vining Creek. The SCE lands that the Forest will be acquiring have outstanding scenic, riparian, recreation, and wetland values.



The Forest is currently processing an exchange with 27 permittees in two recreation residence tracts near the community of June Lake. To facilitate the exchange, the permittees have formed two homeowners associations. The exchange will convey to the permittees fee title ownership of the National Forest land already being occupied by permittee-owned recreation residences. In exchange, the associations will be acquiring, and offering to the Forest Service, several parcels of non-federal lands which the Forest has identified as being high on its priority list for acquisition. Completion is expected by mid-1993.

The Forest has also started processing a land exchange with Mammoth Meadows Associates that is intended to convey into non-federal ownership a 25 acre parcel in the Town of Mammoth Lakes. The parcel, known as Shady Rest parcel, comprises the last National Forest in-holding in Mammoth Lakes. The Town has zoned the parcel for affordable housing purposes, and has approved a plan for developing it with homes and apartments that will be priced to make them affordable for low and moderate income households. Conveyance of the parcel to a non-federal party will facilitate its development in accordance with that plan and help meet the community's need for affordable housing. The Forest will be working with the proponents in appraising the parcels fair market value, and in identifying non-federal lands to be included in an exchange for it. The exchange has a targeted completion date for sometime in the last half of 1993.

Preliminary negotiations have begun for a second exchange with SCE that will provide an opportunity for the Forest Service to acquire all of SCE's remaining land holdings in the Lee Vining Creek drainage. Other possible exchanges that have only preliminarily been discussed, involve Forest Service acquisition of scattered parcels of non-federal land in the Montgomery Pass Wild Horse Territory, and possible disposal of National Forest land for further community development in the South Gateway area of the Town of Mammoth Lakes (south of Meridian Boulevard).

• *Timber Management on the Inyo National Forest*

Overview

With adequate snow, there could be as much as 7 million board feet of sawlog timber removed from the Mono Lake and Mammoth Ranger Districts during the winter of 1992-93. Timber sales under contract include the Bandit Timber Sale east of Smokey Bear Flat on the Mammoth Ranger District and Pilot Ridge Timber Sale in the Pilot Springs vicinity of the Mono Lake Ranger District. In addition, approximately 200 thousand board feet of timber still remains to be removed from the Owens River Timber Sale in the Big Springs vicinity of the Mono Lake Ranger District. These timber sales are consistent with direction provided in the Inyo's 1988 "Land & Resource Management Plan".

Mono Lake and Mammoth Ranger Districts will be conducting an environmental analysis to salvage log approximately 5 million board feet of fire-killed timber from the Rainbow Fire. Only timber outside the wilderness and outside the boundary of the wild and scenic river management prescription will be considered for salvage.

The purpose of this work will be to reduce future fuels problems and thus reduce the fire hazard to the Reds Meadow area. If the preferred alternative is to salvage this timber, logging will occur this winter or the fall of 1993.

The Inyo National Forest will also be conducting an environmental analysis to salvage log insect-killed timber and to construct fuelbreaks for the area between Mammoth Lakes and June Lake. The purpose of this project will be to reduce fire hazard. If the preferred alternative is to salvage this timber, logging will occur in the summer of 1993.

• *Timber Mortality, Fire Prevention and Protection*

Overview

The Inyo National Forest, as with the rest of California, is receiving significant impact to the vegetation as a result of six years of drought. More specifically the conifers between the community of Mammoth Lakes and June Lake on both the east and west sides of Highway 395 are either dead or dying at an alarming rate. This mortality occurs from insect infestation which attack trees that are stressed from the drought.

Of particular concern is the hazardous fire situation that is developing as dead trees add to an already dangerous situation from six years of drought. At risk is not only the remaining timbered areas but the communities of Mammoth Lakes and June Lake, the many recreational developed sites and other special uses including the Mammoth and June Mountain Ski Areas.

If aggressive measures are not taken to reduce this fire hazard, a repeat of the Rainbow Fire (1992) is certain for future years.

Present Status

In August, representatives from the Inyo National Forest and the Towns of Mammoth Lakes and June Lake met to discuss the situation and develop a course of action. The following tasks will be accomplished to reduce the fire hazard and a proactive fire prevention program will be implemented:

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Action Item	When
1. Develop a specific staffing and action guide for the Forest with special emphasis on the mortality areas.	8/14/92
2. Pre-position resources on high Fire Intensity Level (FIL) and Lightning Activity Level (LAL) days from on and off-forest.	Now
3. Continue detailed pre-attack planning in key areas identifying: • H_2O developments • Structural triage • Staging areas • Helispot locations • Incident Command Post (ICP) locations • Safety Zones / Escape Routes • Major traffic routes	5/1/93
4. Intensify Fire Prevention Efforts on certain FIL days with special emphasis on holidays, weekends and special events. Develop a specific fire prevention plan for the area.	5/1/93
5. Intensify media/public relations efforts on fire awareness of the area.	Now
6. Intensify Interagency / District effort for operations meeting for key overhead. On-site meetings to discuss issues.	5/1/93
7. Continue inventory and assessment of area. • Comprehensive map of area • Slash concentrations • Quantity ton/acre • Potential salvage sale areas • Continued liaison with RO • Push Global Positioning Systems (GPS) request • Identify key fuel-wood areas	1/15/93

• *Fire and Aviation Management Budget*

Overview

For the past three years the Inyo National Forest has been able to fully staff all pre-suppression and prevention modules along with all overhead and other support positions. The primary reason for this accomplishment has been the use of seasonal severity funding because of the existing drought conditions in California. Additionally, the Forest has accomplished outyear planning and budgeting to identify the most efficient level (MEL) of protection based on net resource values plus suppression costs.

As a result of severity funding, outyear planning and advice that the fire budget would be financed based on MEL beginning in 1992, the Forest filled most existing fire vacancies and became heavily committed in the Apprenticeship program, filling 16 new positions. Additionally, maximum use of confinement and containment strategies resulted in approximately $35,000 per year of fire suppression savings. This could not have been accomplished without the existing fire organization.

Present Status

At the beginning of Fiscal Year 1992, the budget projections for protection were not good which would have resulted in substantial reductions in the protection capability. Because of the drought situation, seasonal severity funding was made available which allowed the Forest to fully staff protection resources, i.e. engine modules.

For Fiscal Year 1993, preliminary protection budgets are promising which should result in full staffing of protection resources. In addition, outyear projections are also favorable. Consequently the staffing for the Forest for 1993 will be as follows:

- 7 engines staffed 7 days per week from May 15 through October 1, 1993.
- 7 fire patrols from May 15 through October 1, 1993.
- Owens Valley Interagency Communication Center will be staffed 7 days per week, year-long.
- Helicoper 525 at Independence will be staffed from June 1 through October 1, 1993.
- All existing overhead positions will remain at full strength.

• *Program Budget*

Overview

With the exception of forest fire pre-suppression, and a slight increase in recreation funds in the FY 1992 final allocation, the overall Forest budget has remained fairly flat and has lost ground when considering inflation, over the last 4 years. Using FY 1979 as a base year and applying the yearly GNP implicit price deflator, the preliminary budget going into FY 1993 represents a loss of about 7 million dollars over that period of time. If the impacts and costs of doing work resulting from regulatory and administrative requirements were added in, the short-fall is even greater. The Forest's response to this situation, has been to rely more and more on cooperative funding with the State of California in certain functional areas (which is now being reduced because of State budget problems); strengthening our partnership efforts where possible; continuing with a large campground concessionaire program; relying more and more on collection agreements; and unfortunately asking Forest employees to take additional work without compensation. Even with these efforts, our ability to manage and protect the resource, and most importantly to serve the public, is constrained.

Present Status

The preliminary budget for FY 1993 indicates a short fall of almost $600,000 in recreation management, $200,000 in trail maintenance, and $30,000 in wilderness management. While it appears that these funds will be restored in the final allocation, if they are not, these programs will be seriously impacted. Even if the Forest does receive the same level of funding received in FY 1992, short-falls are still anticipated. Operation and maintenance costs for the visitor center at Mono Lake are approaching $300,000 annually, and costs have also increased at the Interagency Visitor Center in Lone Pine, as have costs at the

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other two visitor centers on the Forest.

Other budget line items are slightly up, and some are down, compared to FY 1992. Funding for the lands program continues to be less than 40% of that called for in the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (L&RMP), soil and water funding is about 45%, range, wild horse and burro management is 77%, and wildlife and fisheries programs are only 56% of that called for in the L&RMP. The wildlife program funding mix continues to be a problem in that funding available to support other functional activities such as recreation, range, hydro-electric project re-licensing and new proposals, are much less than that allocated for specific wildlife or fish projects.

The Forest leases various administrative sites as well as buildings, and all of these costs have increased significantly going into FY 1993. General administrative allocations have been increased about 10%, but are still only 60% of the total amount that was identified in the L&RMP.

• *Safe Drinking Water Act*

Overview

The Safe Drinking Water Act was recently amended to increase protection for public users from possible water contamination. One of the key areas addressed in the Amendment is water sources that either come from or are influenced by surface water. By June 28, 1993, these water sources must either be converted to subsurface, the treatment of the water substantially increased, or the water made unavailable for consumption.

Present Status

Sources have been constructed for the sites listed below and the only work that remains is connecting these sources to the existing distribution systems:

- Grays Meadow Campground
- French Camp Campground
- Convict Lake Campground
- Big Bend Campground

Potential new sources have been located at the following sites, with construction taking place by the summer of 1993:

- Big Pine Campground
- North Lake Campground
- Pine Grove Campground
- Mammoth Lakes Basin (2 systems)
- Reds Meadow Campground
- Saddlebag Campground

If the Forest is unable to make the required conversions by June 28, 1993, we have to either petition the State for a short variance, or not provide drinking water at these sites.

We have also decided that it would be uneconomical to make the needed changes at Mosquito Flat Campground and at four day-use sites in the June Lake Loop. Drinking water will therefore be removed at these sites.

• *Forest Plan Amendments*

Overview

The Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) was approved and put into action approximately four years ago in 1988. As the Forest Plan is implemented and monitoring data is evaluated, the need to amend this programmatic document is becoming evident.

The Forest Plan is an "umbrella" document which guides and provides a rational basis for making decisions on site-specific actions throughout the Inyo National Forest. As a working tool, the Forest Plan must provide sufficient direction to Forest officers to enable them to select or reject implementing actions. Every project must pass a "test" as to whether it is consistent with management direction provided by the Forest Plan. While this process has lead to the dismissal of a variety of undesirable actions, this process has also revealed that there are some actions that are desirable and should be approved, but are inconsistent or not adequately covered by the Forest Plan as it currently exists. Thus, it is these latter types of action that have indicated the need to amend the Inyo Forest Plan.

The forest planning process was meant to be dynamic, not static. The Inyo Forest Plan was developed to be in effect for approximately ten years, but no longer than fifteen years before it is replaced by a second generation plan. At the five year point into Plan implementation (1993), a major review of the Plan will be conducted to ensure that it is still "on track". And finally, the amendment process is provided to modify the Plan on an as needed basis.

Present Status

Up to the present time, there has been no need to amend the Inyo

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• *Forest Plan Amendments*

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Forest Plan. However, four years of implementing land management practices has revealed areas of the Plan that are in need of correction, clarification or the addition of information that is lacking. The Forest management team has recently identified and prioritized a listing of proposed amendments. Over the next year the Forest intends to begin producing these Plan amendments. The analysis supporting the amendment process will be conducted in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The NEPA process provides opportunities for public involvement during amendment development, while public notice will be given when an amendment decision is made.

Some amendments will be simple and straightforward. Certain phrases or paragraphs may need to be re-written for accuracy and clarity. Information that wasn't available at the time the Forest Plan was approved may need to be added. For example, the Forest has identified the need to replace an outdated watershed protection methodology with a newer system.

Other amendments may be more complex and require intensive environmental analysis. For example, the Forest Plan contains direction to revise or update the existing management plans for the John Muir and Ansel Adams Wildernesses. To achieve this direction the Inyo National Forest has recently initiated the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for these areas . . . an undertaking that will take several years to complete.

• *Civil Rights Program Initiatives*

Overview

The Inyo National Forest employs a work force of approximately 190 permanent employees and 200+ temporary employees. These men and women come from a variety of race, cultures, and heritages, and include people with disabilities. Concurrently, the Inyo National Forest is serving people from an even greater variety of backgrounds and our ability to attain our mission of "Caring for the Land and Serving People" will be enhanced with a work force that is as diverse as the people we serve.

Attracting and retaining qualified people with diverse backgrounds to small, isolated and rural communities such as Bishop, Lone Pine, Mammoth Lakes, and Lee Vining is a difficult task. The degree to which the communities accept any newcomers and allow them to participate becomes an important reason which attracts them to come and remain here.

Present Status

It is the policy of the Inyo National Forest to provide equal opportunity in all of its employment practices and public services. Specific laws such as the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1991, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act require that no one be discriminated against based on race, sex, national origin, creed, religion, age, disability, or marital status. Affirmative Action laws also require that the Inyo National Forest have a qualified work force reflective of the civilian labor force. Presently our statistics indicate that we have not yet attained this.

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There are many reasons why we have not attained our goal, one of which we believe is poor community acceptance of some employees. Racial divisions that already exist and the lack of support mechanisms to fall back on within some minority groups contribute to the difficulty of attracting qualified people from these groups to our work force and communities. Visiting employees from our Regional Office and current employees of the Inyo National Forest have reported incidences of racial harassment in the communities of Inyo and Mono counties. In addition, there are commonly known divisions along racial lines involving Native American Indians and Hispanics currently living here.

In order for the Inyo National Forest to attract and retain qualified employees form all background, it is imperative that new employees be welcomed and allowed to participate fully in the communities where they will live and work.

As stated earlier, there are many more reasons than just community acceptance that make it difficult to recruit a qualified diverse work force. One is the isolation, size and rural location of the communities in which the offices of the Inyo National Forest are located. This is something that not only can't be changed, but, indeed, is one of the main attractions of the area for many who have chosen to live, work and retire here. However, the issue of non-acceptance of newcomers, or even those presently living here, especially when that non-acceptance is based on such factors as race, religion, color, national origin, gender, disability, age, or marital status, is one that can be addressed.

The Inyo National Forest believes that its goal of attaining a qualified work force reflecting the civilian labor force and the diversity of the people we serve can be achieved. But to achieve it, we must be an employer of choice. To be an employer of choice, the communities where we are located must also be communities of choice for all who want to live and work here.

In the coming year the Inyo National Forest will focus some of its energy on working with the communities of Inyo and Mono counties to address the issues of racism, sexism, and bigotry that affect how people are accepted and allowed to participate in the communities when they come here. Mammoth Lakes has already started this process with round table discussions and actions being taken by a wide variety of civic groups, government agencies, citizens and schools. They are focusing on avoiding some of the problems other communities have had with the immigration of Hispanics to the area. The Inyo National Forest will continue to participate in the Mammoth Lakes process and will initiate similar discussions in the other communities of Inyo and Mono counties.

Our intent is to be pro-active in supporting a work force that is as diverse as the people we serve, but more importantly, to play an active role in working with the people in the communities we live in to make this an area that is attractive and open to anyone who wants to come here to live, work and play.

INYO NATIONAL FOREST

Status Update on 1992 Key Issues

• *Royal Gold Heap Leach*

Royal Gold, Inc. of Denver, CO, has submitted an operating plan to establish an open pit mining operation approximately six miles east of the Town of Mammoth Lakes. The project would include the mine area, a heap leach pad, and a waste rock area. The total area involved would be approximately 80 acres.

Core drilling of the area has shown that there are approximately 45,000 ounces of gold, located on a knoll, within the top 80 feet of the surface. The gold is bound to the host material in a fashion that makes heap leach the most practical method of recovery. The proposed operation would take crushed ore and place it on an impervious pad. A dilute cyanide solution would be sprinkled over the heap pad and recovered. Zinc is then added to the solution, it is pumped through an activated charcoal filter and the gold is absorbed. The concentrate is dried, removed from the filter press and shipped for final processing. The solution is returned to the system and re-used.

During the past few summers, approximately 130 core holes have refined the location of the deposit. Two batch samples have also been taken and analyzed resulting in a determination of needed solution strength. The proponent is requesting to use .2 pounds of cyanide per ton of ore. This is a relatively small amount of cyanide compared to similar type operations in the western states.

The Inyo National Forest agreed to consider the proposal and was preparing an Environmental Impact Statement. There has been no correspondence with Royal Gold, Inc. over the past year and we have put the document on hold until we get further information from them.

• *Tuff Campground & Day Use Facility Expansion*

Tuff Campground, located adjacent to Lower Rock Creek, was identified for expansion together with the addition of day use facilities in the 1960's. The project site is currently occupied by 13 special use recreation residences identified as the Lower Rock Creek Tract. Six of these residences are located within fifty feet of the stream. In January of 1975 the permittees were notified of a decision to place their residences on tenure and a termination date of December 31, 1990, was established. This decision was based upon the following:

1. The 1964 Recreation Management Plan recommended removal of the tract for day use and streamside protection.
2. The 1972 Water Pollution Abatement Report concluded that the tract could not be feasibly sewered and many cabins could contribute pollutants to the stream due to their location and the shallow ground water conditions.
3. The 1972 Ranger Multiple Use Plan recommended a termination date of December 31, 1985, with conversion of the use of the area to day use and campground expansion.
4. The 1974 Forest Review of

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• *Tuff Campground & Day Use Expansion*

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all Recreation Residences recommended the tract be placed on tenure to recapture the site for campground expansion and day use as the presence of the cabins along the stream physically blocked public access. The gentle streamside topography of the site is not common to the Eastern Sierra. The tract was subsequently put on tenure in 1975.

The existing permittees have been offered vacant, in lieu lots, in the nearby Pine Glade Tract. They have the option of either moving their existing structure or constructing a new recreation residence. All 13 permittees have selected new lots. Two of these have accepted permits for new lots and have completed the move. The remaining term permits were to expire on December 31, 1990 but have been extended on a year to year basis. They will now be extended until December 31, 1993. Permittees will be given a nine month period, or until October 1 of the year following termination, to remove and restore their sites.

The one year extensions are being granted due to a commitment by the Forest Service to extend all recreation residence permits until a Final National Recreation Residence Policy is developed. This Final policy is currently being processed by the Washington Office of the Forest Service.

A topographic map and a conceptual development plan have been completed for the campground expansion and day use development of the site.

• *Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Water Litigation*

Forest Service involvement in the resolution of the Mono Lake controversy stems from the Congressional designation of the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area, which rendered the Forest Service a riparian landowner. The draft Scenic Area EIS and Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP), released in 1988, identified a range of lake levels (6377 to 6390), which would best protect the values of the Scenic Area. In 1989, the Forest Service filed as an amicus curiae on behalf of the Audubon Society, when they made a motion for a Preliminary Injunction to raise Mono Lake to 6,377 feet elevation.

In 1990, the Final EIS and CMP were released, with the preferred range of lake levels remaining the same as in the draft. The Forest filed again as an amicus curiae as the Audubon Society attempted to renew the 1989 Preliminary Injunction.

In April of 1991, the El Dorado Superior Court issued a second Preliminary Injunction to restore the level of Mono Lake to 6,377 feet elevation. Prior to this, Judge Finney of the El Dorado Superior Court ruled to allow Forest Service testimony and amicus status, both of which had been protested by LADWP, in this case.

In June of 1991, the Regional Forester, as the reviewing officer, upheld the Forest Supervisor's decision on the Scenic Area EIS and CMP and denied the appeal filed by the Los Angeles

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• *Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Water Litigation*

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Department of Water & Power.

As we enter 1993, the controversy over Mono Lake and its tributary streams continues. The Forest Service remains involved from several angles at this period in time. Our longest standing involvement has been participation in the Mono Lake Group facilitated by the UCLA Public Policy Program. Due to a lack of substantive progress we did not actively participate in 1991, and the group was inactive in 1992. If at some future time there appears to be a reasonable likelihood that we can contribute to a solution that might involve either administrative or legislative actions involving water and power replacement, then we will participate with the group once again.

In 1989, the 3rd District Court of Appeals ordered that the LADWP water licenses to be modified to require flows below their diversion points. This was to bring them in compliance with state Fish and Game codes that protect fisheries. License conditioning is being handled by the State Water Resources Control Board.

Also in 1989, the El Dorado Superior Court stayed proceedings on the public trust case, allowing the State Water Board to administratively deal with the public trust of Mono Lake in conjunction with the studies on the tributary streams. At present the State Water Board has contracted the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report addressing Mono Lake, it tributary streams, and affected downstream areas to Jones and Strokes Associates of Sacramento. The state has set up five Technical Advisory Groups (TAG's) to advise them during the preparation of the EIR and the review of LADWP's water rights. The Forest Service is participating as a member of these groups. The Draft EIR is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 1993. Public hearings on the relicensing are tentatively scheduled for late spring or summer of 1993. It is anticipated that during this process the Water Board will deal with Forest Service water rights in the Mono Basin.

In June of 1990, the El Dorado Superior Court ordered interim flows be released down Parker, Walker, Lee Vining and Rush Creeks and that the streams be restored to their pre-diversion conditions. A Restoration Technical Committee of affected parties was appointed by the court to determine what work and monitoring needed to be accomplished to be in compliance with the court order. The Forest Service is participating as a non-voting member of the committee on Rush and Lee Vining Creeks since portions of these streams cross National Forest lands. Work to restore Lee Vining and Rush Creeks was accomplished in 1991 and 1992 and will continue in 1993.

• *Threatened and Endangered Species*

Management programs are presently in place for the bald eagle and peregrine falcon. The Forest Service continues to work cooperatively with the California Department of Fish and Game to manage these species and their habitat toward the goal of recovery. The Forest continues to support "hacking" efforts to re-introduce peregrine falcons to the Owens Valley.

Paiute Cutthroat and Lahontan Cutthroat Trout are managed according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Recovery Plans and Forest Habitat Management Plans.

Continued drought conditions have been hard on these species both locally, and nationally. In the coming years, the Forest will proceed with cooperative and possible emergency actions to protect the viability of these species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is still in the process of developing a Recovery Plan for the Owens Tui Chub, a species of extremely limited distribution and small population size. The Forest Service has worked cooperatively with the California Department of Fish and Game to expand and enhance chub habitat. These efforts have more than doubled the available habitat and the population. While there has been concern regarding the potential impacts of projects within the Mammoth Basin on local chub habitat, one project has been withdrawn, and another awaits further analysis.

Threatened, endangered, and sensitive species management is a large part of what we do. Approximately 60% of the Fish and Wildlife budget is committed to surveys, habitat enhancements, and monitoring for TES species.

• *Snowcreek Golf Course Proposal*

In April of 1990, Dempsey Construction Corp. submitted an application for a special use permit to construct a portion of the Snowcreek Golf Course on National Forest lands adjacent to the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Subsequently, an environmental assessment was completed, and the Forest Supervisor issued a decision approving the proposal on February 1, 1991.
The decision was appealed by one individual, and over the next 21 months or so, it was reviewed at various levels of the organization and a determination was made that the Chief had not delegated the authority to approve this type of use on National Forest lands to either the Regional or Forest level. As a result, the Forest Supervisor withdrew his decision on November 3, 1992. After some minor changes, the environmental assessment and Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact were sent to the Chief for a final decision on the proposed project.

INYO NATIONAL FOREST

Emphasis Items 1993

- To implement the Air Quality program consistent with Land Management Plan management and monitoring direction and within budget limitations.

- To implement ecosystems management by focusing efforts on Mammoth/June, Crooked/Wyman Creeks and the Kern Plateau.

- To meet all Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), Forest Service Washington Office and Regional Office, and licensee imposed due dates in providing responses to appeals, license/relicense applications, and review/approval of plans submitted for licensed projects during FY 93.

- To implement Fire Ecology and Scenic Byway interpretation.

- To allocate all protection funding and staffing to provide the most efficient level (MEL) organization. Emphasis will be placed on protection of drought effected fuel models and all planning efforts will be associated with fuel breaks, timber salvage (fuel treatment), fire prevention, structural triage, and specific action and staffing guide.

- To update and respond to the Forest Land Management Plan direction within identified budget and personnel constraints.

- To manage Research Natural Areas in coordination with the Pacific Southwest Experiment Station to protect resource and research values, and to develop one additional management plan by the end of FY 1993.

- To determine the appropriate mix of Forest Service and concessionaire operated campgrounds.

- To bring recreation and administrative facilities up to Safe Drinking Water Act standards.

- To fund Recreation/Lands Special Use Programs including administration of all existing permits, renewal of expired permits in a timely manner, permit transfer and acceptance/processing of all new applications. Program will be commensurate with budget.

- To maintain and enhance positive community relationships and public service by establishing, implementing, and emphasizing the role of external communications and support to the public at all levels.

- To assess the potential impacts of a seventh year of drought for all resources, and identify the appropriate mitigation.

- "Caring for the Land and Serving People". To serve the people equally with caring for the land on the Inyo National Forest.

INYO NATIONAL FOREST

"Eastern Sierra / Great Basin Regional Management Initiative"

A joint agreement between the Toiyable National Forest, Intermountain Region and Inyo National Forest, Pacific Southwest Region to provide Quality Management and Customer Service along the Eastern Sierra Nevada / Great Basin interface.

PREAMBLE

Whereas, the ecosystems associated with the Eastern Sierra Nevada and its interface with the Great Basin are unique within the National Forest system in terms of natural flora and fauna, geology and climactic variations, and:

Whereas, the associated values and uses of these ecosystems are extremely diverse, including soil, water, air, forage, wood, recreation, and historic and pre-historic features and;

Whereas, special attractions within the two National Forest boundries include nine classified wildernesses, the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area, two National Forest Scenic Byways, the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest, six Wild and Scenic eligible rivers, and two major alpine skiing resorts, and;

Whereas special attractions adjacent to the National Forest boundries include Lake Tahoe, Death Valley, Yosemite National Park, Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks, and Bodie State Historical Park, and;

Whereas, these attractions draw in excess of 13 million visitors annually from throughout the United States and many foreign countries, to this portion of the two National Forests, and;

Whereas, public lands, of which the National Forests are the dominant element, comprise approximately 95% of the total land base in the area, and numerous interspersed communities are heavily dependent on the National Forest values and uses for their economic well being;

RESOLUTION and AGREEMENT

Be it therefore resolved, that the Inyo National Forest and the Toiyabe National Forest:

1) Will coordinate their mission "to care for the land and serve people" in order to achieve the following ***goals*** on National Forest System lands in the Eastern Sierra Nevada and its interface with the Great Basin:

   To provide quality public services and sound resource management as portrayed in the respective Forest Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMP).

   To promote wise use of the resources in a manner which sustains basic resource values such as soil, water, air and biological diversity, and is consistent with the area's extensive recreational opportunities.

   To showcase Forest Service management of the respective ecosystems and service to the public.

To manage National Forest System lands adjacent to other Federal and State administered lands with consideration for the missions of each respective administering agency and in a manner which enhances the experience of the visitor.

2) Will implement the following ***strategies*** to realize the stated goals of this agreement:

General Coordination

Establish a core group with representation from both Forests, including the following Districts: Carson, Bridgeport, Mono Lake, Mammoth, White Mountain, and Mt. Whitney, and the liaisons identified in the subsequent section, to guide the implementation of the terms and conditions of this agreement and to update the agreement as needed. Provide oversight and supervision to the core team through the Forest Supervisors.

Encourage information sharing between personnel on the respective Forests and Districts to facilitate consistency in program administration and foster the development and distribution of new ideas and concepts. Consider the sister Forest / sister District concept. Appoint a liaison from each Forest to directly interface with the Leadership Team of the other Forest. Conduct an annual joint Leadership Team Meeting, involving the line and staff officers of both Forests, emphasizing issues pertinent to this agreement and others found in common.

Produce a quality marketing plan that will tie the strategies identified in the subsequent sections together and expand upon them, and which will provide a framework for providing a timely and appropriate array of products, services and ideas to the affected publics.

Develop current year and out year program planning and budget strategies that support the implementation of the elements of this agreement.

Customer Service • External

Identify our primary customers and ascertain their wants and needs for desired resource values and uses, and seek to develop a set of mutually agreed expectations consistent with healthy ecosystems. Adjust program direction and Forest LRMP's accordingly.

Seek consistency in services offered to the public, including administration of fuelwood programs and OHV travel plans, fire permits, wilderness permits, and Christmas tree permits.

Develop a communication network and cadre of frontline personnel which allow visitors to receive accurate and current information on points of interest, and all services and recreational facilities from any Forest Service Office along the Eastern Sierra Front.

Sound Resource Management and Wise Resource Use

Review the respective Forest LRMP's and highlight significant inconsistencies in standards and guidelines. Review inconsistencies relative to providing quality land and resource management and customer service in the Eastern Sierra/Great Basin ecosystem, and where appropriate pursue resolution through Forest Plan amendments or revisions.

Adapt current resource management practices and uses to the philosophies espoused in New Perspectives.

Identify significant areas where resource values have been significantly degraded over time and develop a schedule and strategy for their restoration.

Coordinate land adjustment opportunities between the Forests to facilitate the aggressive acquisition of parcels with critical resource values.

Evaluate the potential benefits and values of special emphasis programs, such as Scenic Byways, and coordinate the implementation of those that further the goals of this agreement. Specifically, nominate and designate Highway 395 as a Scenic Byway and develop and implement an associated interpretive plan.

Coordinate training opportunies, involving both Forest personnel and cooperating partners that improve upon our ability to respond to current resource management issues in the area, including range administration and AMP development, and recreation and wilderness management.

Develop management strategies for emerging issues such as future ski area development, increasing recreation demands, and timber harvest impacts.

Showcase Opportunities

Co-sponsor field trips with targeted audiences to highlight current issues, showcase management activities, and cultivate partnership opportunities.

Develop a professional and progressive VIS program, with particular emphasis on interpretive displays and programs which showcase Forest Service management philosophies and activities, and services within the Eastern Sierra / Great Basin Ecosystems. Coordinate the development of an interpretive plan to showcase National Forest System lands and their management along Hwy. 395.

Develop a working rapport with Congressional staffers, dividing responsibilities for each delegation between the respective Forests, and provide periodic briefings to keep them abreast of current issues and activities.

Establish a pro-active relationship with local media, including the Review-Hearld, Inyo Register, Nevada Appeal, Reno Gazette-Journal and local TV and radio stations. Provide, on a regular basis, complete story packages appropriate for each given medium emphasizing the resource values and uses and current management issues along the Eastern Sierra Nevada and its interface with the Great Basin.

Coordination with Other Land Administering Agencies

Develop and nurture relations with other Federal and State agencies influenced by management activities on National Forest System lands, including the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Navy/Marine Corps, California State Parks, California Department of Fish and Game, and Nevada Department of Wildlife. Seek cooperative opportunities to promote shared values and efforts with each, and other agencies as opportunities arise.

Support Inter-agency coordination groups such as the Owens Valley Inter-Agency Committee, the Eastern Sierra Outdoor Recreation Council, and the Inyo Associates.

Interface with Local Counties and Communities

Establish pro-active working relationships with local county governments, Chamber of Commerces, community organizations, and the Native American community to improve Forest Service profile and involvement in local area activities, and management of the National Forests.

Establish an informal advisory group of influential local people to serve as a sounding board and provide feedback on Forest Service management activities.

Conduct a recreation symposium to highlight recreation opportunities in the area.

CHARGE

We, the people of the Inyo and Toiyabe National Forests, are committed to the goals and strategies outlined herein and are fully cognizant of the never ending need to improve upon the quality of resource management and customer service along the Eastern Sierra Nevada and its interface with the Great Basin. We are committed to the development of specific marketing and/or implementation plans to put these strategies into action. We are committed to adjusting work priorities and pursuing whatever ends are necessary to acquire the resources needed to implement the plans and achieve the agreed to end results. We dedicate ourselves to becoming a progressive change agent for the benefit of the land we care for and the people we serve in this unique area.

On behalf of the Inyo National Forest and its employees,

DENNIS W. MARTIN
Forest Supervisor

On behalf of the Toiyabe National Forest and its employees,

R.M. "Jim" NELSON
Forest Supervisor

INYO NATIONAL FOREST

Line and Principal Staff Officers

POSITION	NAME	AREA of RESPONSIBILITY
Forest Supervisor	Dennis Martin	
Mono Lake District Ranger	Vacant	Forest Timber Management in addition to District Administration
Mammoth Lakes District Ranger	Debra Austin	State and Private Forestry in addition to District Administration
White Mt. District Ranger	JoEllen Keil	District Administration
Mt. Whitney District Ranger	Vacant	District Administration
Administrative Officer	Kay Hatch	Business Management, Law Enforcement, Personnel, Purchasing & Contracting & Information Systems
Engineer & Minerals Officer	Dan Totheroh	Engineering & Minerals
Operations Officer	Joe Stutler	Planning, Budget, Lands, Radio & Fire Protection
Resource Officer	Ron Keil	Wildlife & Fisheries, Range, Soil, Water, and Air
Recreation Officer	Bill Bramlette	Recreation, Wilderness, Cultural Resources, Human Resource Programs
Civil Rights Officer	Debby Hyde-Sato	Civil Rights Program, Management and Compliance except Title VI
Public Affairs Officer	Nancy Upham	Marketing, Media & Community Relations, & Legislative Affairs